

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY

QUESTION NUMBER: 2683 [NW3174E]

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2683. Mr D J Maynier (DA) to ask the Minister of Finance:

- (1) Whether a certain person (name furnished) was authorised by the SA Revenue Services to send a letter to the *Business Day*, which was published on 28 November 2016, entitled Gangster Ratings Agencies; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (2) whether any disciplinary action will be taken against the specified person; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant details;
- (3) whether he will make a statement on the matter?

NW3174E

REPLY:

This information is provided by the South African Revenue Service (SARS).

- (1) No. Mr Lebelo was not authorised by SARS to send a letter to the *Business Day* which was published on 28 November 2016 entitled "Gangster Ratings Agencies".
- (2) No, SARS will not be taking any disciplinary action against Mr Lebelo as he wrote to the *Business Day* in his private and personal capacity.
- (3) No.

As far as the Ministry is concerned:

- a) Mr Lebelo, as a senior and influential manager in SARS, should not be commenting on a sensitive and serious matter such as ratings in the public domain;
- b) Mr Lebelo's attack on the ruling party, the ANC, is both from a point of ignorance and unwarranted;

- c) He displays a complete lack of understanding of the role of borrowing money both locally and from foreign lenders in helping to finance our social programmes for the poor. It is the very same poor people and the vulnerable middle class South Africans, the vast majority of whom are black, who will be affected by rising interest rates and prices should the South African sovereign lose its investment grading.
- d) Finally, his letter to the media indicates clearly that he writes in two capacities – one of which is “Group Executive of Employment Relations, SARS”.
- e) Surely, he cannot be allowed to attack the very government that pays his salary on a matter that is of importance to all South African’s – except those who pursue an ignominious agenda against the national interest – with impunity?
- f) The SARS management must account for their lack of action in this matter.